

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: 5434 testimony

My name is Karolin Regan and I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. I am writing regarding concerns I have regarding the regulation of cannabis in this state. I strongly encourage to implement the changes below to keep the youth and residents of Connecticut safe.

We should not allow producers to manipulate THC to make a stronger, more addictive product. We restricted tobacco companies from doing this with cigarettes to reduce nicotine addiction and other health issues. It is common sense to apply this to all THC products as well. Research shows that the negative health impacts of THC increase significantly with products over 10% THC. Setting a cap at 30% THC on all THC products and servings will limit some impairments and related consequences. This must include all THC vape products. Local youth surveys across the state demonstrate that vaping is the preferred method of THC ingestion among youth. This loophole in potency caps must be closed to protect our youth. Finally, all THC edibles must be a single serving.

Penalties for marijuana law violations should not be less, and even non-existent compared to alcohol. For example, a first time youth offender possessing alcohol is referred to a diversionary program such as a Juvenile Review Board. Any youth in noncompliance is charged with a Class A misdemeanor. In addition, their driver's license is suspended or they must wait longer to apply for their license. We must not make the mistakes we made with other juvenile law that resulted in an increase of youth stealing cars with no penalties. A drug dealer can simply use youths to make their transactions without concern for penalties or criminal record, only to steal another car a few days later. Laws for youth possession of marijuana and THC products should be the same as for alcohol and I call on the General Law Committee to close this loophole.

I strongly encourage you to repeal restrictions on cannabis-related stops and searches of persons and motor vehicles when it is obvious that they are using while driving or driving under the influence. We must keep our roads as safe as possible. In addition, I support the expansion of the drug recognition expert certification program. This will require financial support from the legislature to police departments across the state as the program is expensive and time consuming. Because there is no reliable roadside test for THC impairment, DRE's are essential to keeping our roads safe. Many other states with commercial marijuana sales have experienced increases in impaired driving and crashes due to THC impairment.

We should have warning labels similar to alcohol and tobacco for all THC products. Proposed bill 5434 address warning labels, and while I agree warning labels should include that such products may be addictive, lead to birth defects or cause psychosis, and that secondhand cannabis smoke is toxic to human health, these warnings don't go far enough. Health Warning Labels on all packaging should include graphics, which research shows is more effective. All

cannabis points of sale should be required to display health warning info on large posters that are bilingual and include easily understood graphics. Examples from the Vermont Cannabis Control Board warns the following: keep all cannabis products away from children and pets, not to use while pregnant or breastfeeding, that using edibles contain additional dangers, that it may not be transported across state lines, that persons under age 25 are more likely to experience harms to their brains, and that it is against the law to drive or operate machinery when under the influence of THC products. The Vermont Medical Society warns that cannabis/THC may cause: psychosis, impaired driving, addiction, suicide attempt, uncontrollable vomiting, and harm to fetus/nursing babies.

I strongly support prohibiting any gas station, convenience store, or any non-licensed cannabis retailer to sell any THC products including, but not limited to Delta 8, delta 10, delta 11, THC-O and any other THC derivative created from Hemp or the cannabis plant. Closing this loophole must be worded carefully so that any new product designed slightly different is covered.

In addition, cannabis products should be sold in child-proof containers. This should be in statute, not just in DCP regulations. And what child-proof packaging is, should be explicit in the law. Don't leave this up to the industry to decide. The Department of Consumer Protection should review and approve each cannabis product type and its dosage, review cannabis tracking procedures in retail establishments and pharmacies, and designate cannabis as a Schedule II controlled substance so it can be studied for both its benefits and harms.

Sincerely,

*Karolin Regan*

Karolin Regan, LCSW